

PROFILES IN REUSE

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY RESTORE VENTURA COUNTY

The ReStore is a building materials thrift store that sells new and used building materials to the public. Organizations and individuals donate all the items sold, and all proceeds from the ReStore are used to support the mission of Habitat for Humanity of Ventura County.

In September of 1999, Habitat of Ventura County opened a ReStore in Ventura. They quickly outgrew their first location and moved into a 6000-square-foot warehouse in Oxnard. The ReStore has become an extremely successful ongoing fundraiser for Habitat, having already funded the building of one Habitat home. The ReStore is the ongoing fundraiser for Habitat for Humanity of Ventura County.

The ReStore accepts new and used building materials (that is, doors, windows, fixtures, hardware, toilets, lumber, drywall, non-upholstered furniture, etc.). All materials accepted must be in good, usable condition.

All materials are donated and resold at thrift store prices. Pickups may be scheduled for donations that exceed five or more items in Ventura County. Call (805) 981-2268 to schedule an appointment. The organization serves Ventura County.

Days/hours of operation are Monday–Saturday, 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Materials may be dropped off during these hours.

Stephanie Varela,
ReStore Manager
167 Lambert Street
Oxnard, CA 93010

Cross Street: 1.5 miles East
on Vineyard off Highway
101

Phone: (805) 981-2268

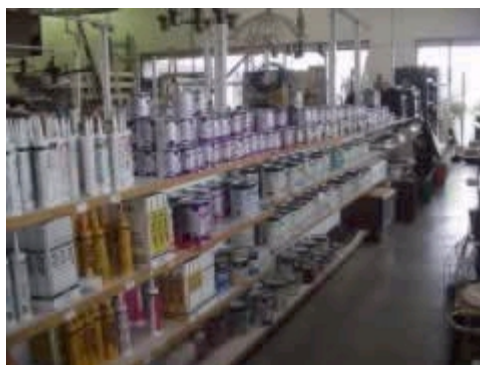
Fax: (805) 485-5795

E-Mail:

bethanyl@habitatventura.org

Web site:

www.habitatventura.org/



PROFILES IN REUSE

RESOURCE AREA FOR TEACHERS (RAFT)

RAFT is a nonprofit organization that collects surplus business items from computers to packing materials and, through workshops, trains teachers to use these materials in the classroom to enhance their programs including math, science, art, and technology. RAFT enables teachers to improve the quality of learning through the materials, at the same time saving teachers money.

RAFT was founded in 1995 by executive director Mary Simon and has grown to serve more than 600,000 school children in the Bay Area. The organization has diverted large amounts of school materials previously destined for the landfill.

Disabled volunteers help to operate RAFT by assisting in packaging materials for classroom use. Hundreds of members visit RAFT's 34,600 square-foot facility each week to obtain inexpensive school supplies and computers. The RAFT members also participate in workshops that provide creative ideas for teaching. Eighty-five percent of the teachers

in local public schools are members of RAFT, as are many private schools and hundreds of children-oriented nonprofit organizations.

RAFT received \$400,000 from the Cadence Stars and Strikes event in October 2001, and the organization recently completed a \$5 million capital campaign to pay for its San Jose building. These efforts are enabling RAFT to further expand its services to reach additional teachers and children.

Materials accepted include letterhead paper, office items, and clean materials and manufacturing by-products. Staff and volunteers sort the items, refurbish computers, and compile kits for classrooms. Local businesses and industry supply the materials, which are all donated.

Collection services are free within 40 miles of the Bay Area. Call (408) 451-1420 for drop-off hours.

Days/hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m.; Saturday, 9:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Mary Simon, Executive Director
1355 Ridder Park Drive
San Jose, CA 95131
Major Cross Street: Brokaw at 880

County: Santa Clara
Phone: (408) 451-1420
Fax: (408) 451-1428
E-Mail: raft@raft.net
Web site: www.raft.net/



PROFILES IN REUSE

FOOD FINDERS

Food Finders is a nonprofit food rescue program dedicated to feeding those in need. Volunteers collect and distribute food, along with other essential items, to missions, shelters, treatment centers, senior centers, children's homes, etc. in both Los Angeles and Orange counties at no cost to the recipients. Food Finders provides approximately 20,000 meals a day through its services.

Food Finders has been in existence since 1991. For its first 11 years, the organization was located in the home of the executive director, Arlene Mercer. Its current location is off of a major street, which has greatly aided in its visibility.

A thrift shop has been operating out of Food Finders since November 2001, with all of its proceeds benefiting Food Finders.

Additionally, any items remaining from estate sales where Mercer is named as the executor are given to Food Finders to sell. Levitz Furniture Corp. also assists by donating furniture once a month. The staging area at Food Finders is used to hold items that have been sold at the thrift shop, or for items that are not sellable.

Ninety-nine percent of food never comes through Food Finders' door. Volunteers pick up and deliver about 10,000 pounds of food to recipient agencies each day—most recipients are close in proximity and food is delivered with no delay. The majority of Food Finders' efforts are spent on facilitating connections between donors and recipients of food.

Food Finders operates with 200 established delivery routes that are managed by volunteers. Chris Fischer, the South Bay coordinator, is responsible for 30 routes in the South Bay; Susan Beckley is responsible for 170. Once a delivery route is established, it is very easy to maintain.

QSI donated dock space, office space, and electric current for Food Finder's refrigerated, 44-foot trailer. Food is placed in the trailer for distribution to agencies that arrive at the trailer. The organization currently operates with two working trucks and is looking for a third.

The Rainbow Resource Guide is another service of Food Finders. This guide directs people to resources that provide food, shelter, etc. Food Finders advertises its services with flyers placed in newspapers and has a mailing list of 1,900 for its newsletter. Donors are protected by Food Finders' liability insurance and by the Good Samaritan Law.

Because Food Finders is able to operate with such low administration costs (volunteers use their own vehicles), every dollar that is donated creates \$15 that is returned to the community.

Sometimes people bring food, mostly bread goods. Because Food Finders is not a food bank, a zoning law requires that only 30 cans of food or less may be stored at the facility.

Mercer is always willing to speak to groups, rotary clubs, chambers of commerce, churches, etc., in an effort to educate people about Food Finders' services. Food Finders' recent coverage in a front-page article of the Daily Breeze

resulted in four new volunteers. The organization is always trying to recruit more volunteers and donors, since both are the key to its operation. Materials accepted are edible food and other essential items.

Food Finders is always recruiting new donors. Borders Books and Music in Palo Alto keeps the leftovers from its café for Food Finders' volunteers to collect. Food Finders also has a working relationship with L.A. Produce Mart. Businesses besides restaurants and grocers often have food available and are willing to donate it. America Honda Building's cafeteria serves prepared food and the leftovers are donated to Food Finders.

Exxon Mobile on 190th Street and Boeing are huge donors to Food Finders—both sought out the organization. Food Finders also works a great deal with the local farmers' markets and receives about 20 pounds of bread from each. The Long Beach Sunday Farmers' Market provides Food Finders with 200 pounds of food each week, the city of Torrance provides 10,000 pounds of food during the holidays, and the May 2002 Post Office Canned Food Drive recently brought 15,000 pounds of food.

Please call Food Finders at (562) 598-3003 for more information.

**Arlene Mercer, Executive
Director**
3434 Atlantic Avenue
Long Beach, CA 90807

Phone: (562) 598-3003
Fax: (562) 283-1403
Web site: www.foodfinders.org/

PROFILES IN REUSE

L.A. SHARES

L.A. SHARES is a nonprofit materials reuse program that accepts donated materials from the local business community. Materials accepted include reusable goods and materials that are both new and used. Materials may include manufacturing overages, discontinued and surplus items. Materials are then stored at two Los Angeles County warehouses, and on a quarterly basis, nonprofits may “shop for free.” L.A. SHARES redistributes all materials free of charge to nonprofit organizations and schools throughout Los Angeles County.

L.A. SHARES is the largest single donor of goods and materials to the Los Angeles Unified School District, the arts community, after-school enrichment programs, parks and recreation programs, theatre groups, and nonprofits affiliated with alcohol and drug recovery programs, among others. L.A. SHARES recently received \$50,000 as a sole-source grant from the California Integrated Waste Management Board. This grant enabled L.A. SHARES to launch its Web site and conduct a survey of 300 Los Angeles City-based nonprofit organizations and schools that assessed their top 20 needs for reusable materials. With their new Web-based strategy, L.A. SHARES is now able to almost instantly match donors with recipients.

Additionally, through the grant, L.A. SHARES designed a brochure, which was distributed to the top 1,000 corporations in Los Angeles. The organization created a direct mail piece encouraging corporations to donate reusable materials to L.A. SHARES as an ongoing waste reduction strategy. A tracking system used to monitor project outcomes was also employed using grant funds.

Materials Accepted

Office furniture, office supplies, and office equipment (including computers and audio-visual). In order to be accepted, all equipment and furniture must be in good working order. L.A. SHARES does not accept any toxic materials, food, clothing, bedding, refrigerators, washers, dryers, stoves, paint, or construction debris. L.A. SHARES distributes 99.9 percent of the materials received to nonprofits.

Source of Materials

Los Angeles County businesses.

Collection Services

Due to limited funds, free collection services are provided (within Los Angeles County) for donated materials valued at \$3,000 or greater. Otherwise, businesses are encouraged to



deliver donated materials directly to either L.A. SHARES warehouse.

Geographic Service Area

Los Angeles County.

Drop-Off Hours

Call in advance to arrange for a drop-off appointment.

Days/Hours of Operation

Monday-Friday: 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. By appointment only.

Bert Ball, Director

3224 Riverside Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90027

Major Cross Street: Los Feliz Boulevard

County: Los Angeles

Phone: (213) 485-1097

Fax: (213) 485-9237

E-Mail: admin@lashares.org

Web site: www.lashares.org

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PROFILES IN REUSE

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY ReStore, SACRAMENTO COUNTY

Sacramento County's Habitat for Humanity ReStore is a building materials thrift store that sells new and used building materials to the public. Organizations and individuals donate all the items sold, which are then used to build Habitat homes or sold to the public. All proceeds from the ReStore support the mission of Habitat for Humanity of Sacramento County. The ReStore prevents valuable materials and resources from being landfilled and simultaneously provides businesses and individuals with a way to save money on construction and remodeling projects.

Operations

The ReStore has four regular volunteers and 10 to 12 volunteers each weekend for the Saturday sales. Five to six volunteers are from Americorps; individuals, high school students, and college students also volunteer their time. People who have received Habitat homes also volunteer on a consistent basis. Many volunteer groups prefer to assist with the retail operations of the ReStore.

The ReStore has a variety of volunteer opportunities and will cater to people's interests and abilities—no experience is necessary! Call the ReStore for information on how to volunteer.

While the ReStore is currently advertised only through flyers, their Web site, and word of mouth, they desire to eventually have a public service announcement campaign and advertising campaign. Currently, more than 150 people frequent the ReStore on a daily basis.

Several surrounding businesses have helped the ReStore become established through generous donations: Raley's donated six electric pallet jacks and Rulands and Intel provided the office furniture and materials.

Materials Accepted

The ReStore accepts new and used building and remodeling materials such as draperies, lights, fixtures, doors, windows, etc.—almost any material that can be used to build Habitat houses or resold at the ReStore. Call the donation hotline at (916) 761-1584 for list of acceptable materials. A tax-deductible receipt is issued for all donations.

Source of Materials

The ReStore's main sources of materials are surplus from stores, manufacturers that change inventories, distributors, and the general public.



Collection Service

The ReStore provides a pickup service for donations from the general public by appointment only.

Geographic Service Area

Sacramento County and surrounding areas.

Drop-Off Hours

Donations are accepted once a week; call the donation hotline at (916) 761-1584 for list of materials accepted.

Days/Hours of Operation

Monday-Friday: 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. The ReStore holds Saturday sales every other week, which are open to the public. The ReStore is closed on January 21 (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day), February 18 (President's Day), and all other major holidays.

Archie Milligan, Executive Director

426 North Seventh Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

County: Sacramento
Phone: (916) 440-1215

Fax: (916) 440-1218

E-Mail: hfh@calweb.com

Web site: www.shfh.org/restore.htm

PROFILES IN REUSE

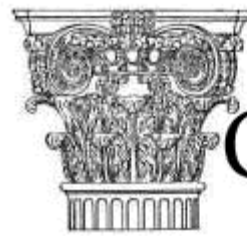
OHMEGA SALVAGE

Ohmega Salvage buys and sells usual and unusual building materials. The company's goal is to save architectural materials that are still useful to others and essential to authentic restoration projects. Ohmega Salvage sells both antique hardware and reproduction hardware, new and used plumbing fixtures, antique and used bathtubs, sinks (as well as "factory second" items at discounted prices), antique lighting, doors, and mantels. The general public is the usual recipient of Ohmega Salvage's materials. Unique antiques, architectural items, and tiles are imported from around the world. The company also rents and sells props for movies, theater productions, print ads, etc.

Established in 1976, Ohmega Salvage has seen a 10 percent growth in their business each year. Over the last 20 years, Ohmega Salvage has become known as the leading supplier of restoration materials to contractors, architects, and homeowners.

Materials accepted are used house parts (lights, doors, sinks, bathtubs, fixtures, mantels, marble, tile, ironwork, hardware, and architectural elements). Contractors, manufacturers, and individuals sell materials to Ohmega Salvage, which pays for most items.

Collection service is free within 50 miles of the Bay Area. Hours of operation are Monday–Saturday, 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.; and Sunday 12:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m. Drop-off hours are the same.



**Ohmega
Salvage**

Steve Drobinsky, Owner
Ohmega Salvage
2407 San Pablo Avenue (major
cross street: Ashby or University)
Berkeley, CA 94703
(510) 843-7368
Fax: (510) 843-7123
ohmegasalvage@earthlink.net
www.ohmegasalvage.com